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Grand Rapids ...
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THE PROPOSED
CALVINISTIC COLLEGE

AT

GRAND RAPIDS

BY

B. KUIPER, A. B.

INTERCOURSE IN HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.

H. SEVENSMA,

547 N. EAST ST. GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

1900.

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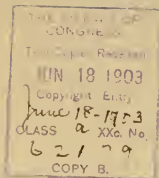
AT
GRAND RAPIDS

BY
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B. SEVENSMA,
247 SO. EAST ST., GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.
1903.

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TO MY
Father
THE ACKNOWLEDGED
PIONEER AND CHAMPION
OF
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
AMONG US
AND WHO HAS DONE SO MUCH TO
GIVE ME AN EDUCATION
I INSCRIBE
THE FOLLOWING PAGES
WITH FILIAL
PIETY AND LOVE.

PREFACE.

Much has been said and written of late, and probably still more will be said and written in the near future, about our establishing a College under Calvinistic colors. In nearly every case, however, the language used was Dutch. But a constantly growing number among us can no longer be reached through that medium. The Banner of Truth unfortunately enjoys but a limited circulation. Hence this attempt to reach the English-reading class among our people.

B. K.

*Grand Rapids, Mich.
May 30, 1903.*

IT is high time for us, members of the Christian Reformed Church of America, no longer to drift along thoughtlessly with the current, BUT TO BECOME FULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE POSITION WE OUGHT TO OCCUPY IN AMERICA.

“Know thyself”, can be demanded justly not only of the individual but of a people as well, when the stage of infancy has been passed. We are no more in that stage, and there should be searchings of heart among us. The time for introspection has come upon us. We should ask ourselves certain questions.

What are we here for in this country?

Are we here simply to eat and to drink and to enjoy the fat of this land of plenty and abundance?

Are we here to expend all our energies of body and soul in the mad struggle for our share of the millions of American wealth?

Are we here to become great and conquer for ourselves places of honor and fame in American society?

Or are we here to do a work, to perform a task, to carry out a mission?

Perhaps we shall be able to see what we are here for when we recall how we came here.

THE IMMIGRATION

IT was on the 2nd of October, 1846, that a sailing ship sailed from the port of Rotterdam with destination for New York. The name of the ship is in doubt but it might fitly be christened "The Flower of the 19th Century", for on board that ship sailed from Raalte with a company of Dutch emigrants, who in their character and in the circumstances under which they left their native land, bore a striking resemblance to the Pilgrims of 1620.

In the beginning of the last century Holland had become estranged away from the faith of the fathers. The spirit had departed from the reformed Church in the Netherlands and nothing but a lifeless form was left. In 1816 its organization was also radically changed, whereby it became a State-church. However, the

the divine character of the Bible undermined. Some withdrew themselves almost entirely from public life, and met in each other's houses where they read sermons and theological works of old orthodox writers. Not only laymen, however, also among the ministers there were a few faithful to the old standards. In 1834 Rev. de C. of a village in the province of Groningen, came into conflict with the governing bodies of the church because of his outspoken views. Soon other ministers in various parts of the country were involved in similar conflicts.

Then something happened which will forever be a blot in the annals of Holland. The country that had won such a heroic war for liberty of conscience against the tyranny of Spain now began to persecute its own ministers for the sake of religion. The ministers were persecuted against the unscriptural organization of the State-church with the people who followed them, were heavily fined and thrown into prison. Rude soldiers, who well understood how to annoy and harass in every conceivable way, and to keep them out, were quartered in their houses. The religious dissenters were broken up by mob violence, and the pastors were more than once in actual danger.

But although political persecution had come to members of the Separatist churches still remained undeban. Public feeling toward them continued to be ban. The name of Separatist was a stigma. The question, anxiously asked by one minister to another, "When will the time come that the Separatists more without annoyance can walk along the streets?" clearly indicates the condition of affairs. The Separatists found themselves strangers in their own land. In addition to religious persecution, economical distress, felt most keenly by the poorer classes, and nearly all the Separatists belonged, made life hard in Holland. In other countries on the continent also the Separatists were persecuted, and they were convulsed by the throes of the revolution of '30 and of the coming one of '48. In Ireland the potato crop failed for several seasons. Then came the report of political liberty across the seas. Europe was seized with an emigration-epidemic, and also Holland did not escape the influence of this epidemic. Providentially, in a particular sense of the word, the leading ministers of the Separatists, *Dr. Van Raalte*, and others, did not entertain plans of emigration.

Dr. Van Raalte had been bred at the world-famous university of Leyden. He had been among those who bore the brunt of the attack against the Separatist movement, and had had his

South Africa had many attractions for men of D both these fields had to be given up, and North A cided upon. Meetings were held in various cities der the leadership of Van Raalte a company Rotterdam, and arrived in New York on the 17th 1846. The descendants of the Dutch settlers of N had been informed of their coming, and by them ers, exhausted by a stormy voyage of one month were welcomed and hospitably entertained. From company went to Albany, and thence by canal-bo in Detroit and St. Clair they found a resting place Van Raalte's plan was to push on to Wisconsin, b dent his attention was called to a hilly region along Lake Michigan, between the Grand and the K Next spring he led his company to the shores of there laid the foundation of his colony at the pr city of Holland.

When the small band of Dutch immigrants what was to be their new home, Michigan had be

banks of Black Lake and River, and stretching along the shores of Lake Michigan, and far inland, still stood "the forest primeval." Dr. Van Raalte and his company, with those who came in the years immediately following, were among *the pioneers of the State of Michigan*.

These Dutch pioneers, men and women just come out of an old civilization into the wilds of the New World, had to do the work of pioneers, and suffer the privations which are always the lot of pioneers. During the first years they were necessarily almost entirely absorbed in the struggle for existence. They were nearly all poor people, and their first care was to provide the material necessities of life. The great work was to clear the land of its wood in order that crops might be raised. The task was especially difficult for men who came from a land where that phase in the history of civilization had been passed through centuries ago. Instructed however by kind Americans in the war against the giants of the forests, the new settler soon began to swing his ax with considerable deftness. But the sufferings were nevertheless great in the beginning. Rude huts of bark, but partially protecting from cold and rain, served as dwelling places. When the rays of the scorching American summer sun were caught in the small clearings, over which the sultry air hung still and motionless, as in a trap, the heat became unbearable. Swamps and the virgin soil, stripped of its timber and plowed up for the first time, steamed with poisonous vapors. Provisions were scarce, and could be procured only by weary journeys along Indian trails through the woods to Grand Haven, Kalamazoo, or Grand Rapids. There were times when it was difficult to find a hut without its sick, and not less difficult to find enough healthy people to bury the dead. More than once the people were

on the point of losing heart and deserting the spot. The picture drawn by Dickens in *Martin Chuzzlewit* of the environment and experiences of young Martin, and his ever jolly companion Mark Tapley in Eden, with the loud colors toned down a little, will give a fair idea of the young Dutch settlement on the Black Lake. Many of the settlers, just as those two young Englishmen, and as many of the early Spanish and French explorers, had dreamed of finding back in America the lost garden of Eden. Their disappointment was great, and in the bitterness of their heart, as the children of Israel in the desert, they turned against their Moses with threats and reproaches. But the greatness of Van Raalte as leader never shone more brilliantly than in those days that tried men's souls. He rode from hut to hut, administered medicine, and spoke words of comfort and cheer by the bedside of the sick and the dying. When on the Sabbath, the men and women with their children had dragged their bodies weak and weary to the gathering place in the woods, his sermons aroused new strength, new hope, new enthusiasm, and on the care-worn faces and in the sunken eyes a new light kindled. One Sunday Dr. Van Raalte, early in the morning, had been called to the bedside of a dying man. As he returned to the small congregation waiting for him, he mounted the stump and began with saying: "Brethren and sisters, the angels rejoice, for out of these woods a soul this morning ascended to heaven." Times were however when the courage and faith of the leader himself came near the point of succumbing. Preaching one time on the text, "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door," in his prayer he cried out, "O Lord, must we all die here!" and amidst the sobs of his hearers the voice of the preacher was stifled by tears.

It was in the most literal, actual sense of the word a struggle for existence. But from the beginning, and in the thick of the struggle, when the people were almost entirely absorbed in laying the *material* foundation of the colony, Van Raalte never for a moment lost sight of the *intellectual* and *spiritual* needs of the people. Besides *churches*, he labored to erect *schools*, and insisted on the publication of a *paper*. The struggle for existence was long and hard, but these Dutch settlers at last came out victorious, thanks to their dogged perseverance, wrought in them by their faith in almighty God. To-day the city of Holland, prosperous and growing at a rapid rate, stands as a monument to the heroic leadership of Dr. Van Raalte. Round about it lie the flourishing agricultural villages of Graafschap, Zeeland, Vriesland, Drenthe, etc., etc., and the country, once covered by endless woods, is now dotted with farms possessed by the descendants of Van Raalte's followers. The sons and daughters of these early settlers have spread also to the neighboring cities of Grand Rapids, Grand Haven, Muskegon, Kalamazoo, Chicago, etc., where their number, swelled by the arrival of Dutch immigrants of later years, is a large element in the population.

The year following Dr. Van Raalte's departure from the Netherlands, another company of emigrants, also Separatists from the State-church, spurred on by similar motives, landed at Baltimore, and under the guidance of the Rev. H. P. Scholte, came for rest from religious and social troubles to the wide and fertile prairies of Iowa, and not inaptly called the place where they settled Pella. These colonists also experienced their share of hardships in their pioneer life, but naturally the struggle here did not bear such a desperate character as in Michigan. Here too the Dutch settler, with the immigrant that came later, showed himself well adapted

to American conditions and he has thrived and multiplied in the Western States. A not inconsiderable number of immigrants remained in the Eastern States, so that to-day Dutch immigrants and their descendants are living in perhaps all the Northern States of the Union, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

To sum up the history of the immigration:

1. The social and religious conditions were unfavorable in the Netherlands.
2. The original settlers, and the great mass of the immigrants who came later, were members of the Separatist Churches in the Netherlands.
3. The struggle for existence in the early days was hard and all-absorbing.
4. The great Leader never lost sight of the intellectual and spiritual needs of the people.
5. As a people we now enjoy material prosperity in our new country.



OUR CALLING

WE have seen how we came here.

How shall we now answer the question, *What are we here for in these United States?*

Shall we live as John Chinaman does, and return after a few years with bags full of "Amelican dollars"? The Chinaman-type of immigrant has always been extremely rare among us. We have come to stay.

Shall we try to remain Dutch however, and build up a miniature Holland in these regions? Such a project stands condemned at the bar of history, and is foredoomed to failure. Let he who cannot possibly learn to feel himself at home here on this side of the Atlantic, return in peace to where he came from.

First of all, we are here to recognize, every one of us, and openly, frankly, and unequivocally to accept the fact that *we are now American citizens.*

Does that mean that we are to feel ashamed of our Dutch descent, and that we must try to forget it ourselves, and hide it from others? On the contrary, as American citizens we have every reason to feel proud of our Dutch blood. In English ears "Dutch" for several reasons sounds as a term of ridicule. In the History of Samuel Titmarsh the English Comman-

der-in-Chief says to Mrs. Hoggarty, "Madam, if that is not my friend Mick Hoggarty, I'm a Dutchman!" But a true American will be the first to despise a fellow-citizen who is ashamed of his Dutch ancestry. There was a time when the erroneous view prevailed in this country that America was nothing but a transplanted *England*. As our country is, however, growing farther away from the old colonial period, and beginning to live a more and more consciously independent, national life, and with the enormous progress in historical study in this country during the last decades, the truer and wider view is gaining credence that America, however much modified, is a transplanted *Europe*. Every American citizen traces his ancestry back to some one of the countries of Europe. Now, among the nations of Europe, the Dutch may hold up their head with just pride. No nation can point to a more glorious record. I do not wish here to enter into a discussion of the mooted question whether America owes more to England or to Holland. Every student of history will admit that America owes too much to Holland than that we, as American citizens of Dutch descent, can afford to forget the land of dykes and dunes. We are to hold Holland in loving remembrance just as the American of English origin does England.

What does it mean then to be an American citizen? To be an American is to recognize, however much we may love old Europe with all its historic traditions, that we are after all no longer Dutch, French, German, Swedish, or English, but a new nation, a nation different from all other nations, with a character and a mission all our own.

But having thus become American citizens, are we here now simply to eat and drink and enjoy the fat of this land of plenty

and abundance, or . . . are we here for some higher purpose?

Who will or can deny that there are great numbers of people among us who seem to have no higher ambition than to become great in the world, and conquer for themselves and their children places of honor and fame in American society? Who expend all their energies of body and soul in the mad struggle for the millions of American wealth?

It is easy enough to explain this condition of affairs. By all odds the great majority of our people left Holland because of poverty, or at least because of a decline in business, or because there seemed to be no prospects, for their children. We came with the avowed purpose to improve our social condition. That idea was *uppermost* in the minds of many. So, when they stepped on land in New York, their minds had already assumed a strongly *materialistic* bent. We have seen from the brief historical sketch given, the few remaining original settlers, now grey-haired men and women stooping toward the grave, remember from personal experience, how bitter the first struggle for *mere* existence was. That struggle, which consisted in the felling of trees, and the clearing of land in order that crops might be raised, *necessarily* absorbed almost all the energies of the early settlers, and of their children as well as soon as they were only old enough. The people thought of almost nothing else but of how to make the colonial enterprise a *material*, a *financial* success. In this way the materialistic bent of mind with which the immigrant set foot on American soil was hardened into a *fixed habit* of mind.

Moreover we should not forget that it was not the Dutch colonist of 1847 alone, who was actuated by motives and subjected to influences that well-nigh irresistably led all his thoughts in a materialistic direction. It is true the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the

Huguenots, the Scotch-Irish, the Quakers, and also the Catholics who owned the Calverts as their proprietary lords, fled across the ocean to America for the sake of freedom of *religion*. But the same is true to some extent of the followers of Van Raalte and Scholte. But every one "who does not read history with his 'fantasies' but with his eyes"—in as far as it is given to man to do so—knows too, that neither with the colonists of the 17th, nor with the colonists of the 19th century, the motive for leaving the old world and seeking the new was *purely* religious. Then as well as later men were attracted to America by the hope of social improvement. There can be no question that also then as well as later the social motive was with many the stronger of the two, sometimes the only one. And so it came about that in many sections of the country the tone of life was, from the beginning on, decidedly materialistic. In New England the religious element was at first the strongest, and for more than a century religion there remained the dominant force in life, but by the year 1800 it had ceased to be such an active principle. The pioneers who about that time in great numbers began to cross the Alleghanies, and who pushed on into the western wilds till they had reached the shores of the Pacific, thus virtually achieving within half a century that magnificent conquest of a continent, made possible by the Louisiana Purchase, which is to be celebrated this year by the World's Fair at St. Louis, and a conquest which is forever to remain one of the grandest chapters in the history of the onward sweep of civilization, although thousands and thousands of them were earnest, religious men, were, however, not driven on upon their westward march by a *religious* motive. What impelled them to leave the Atlantic sea-board was *nothing* but the desire for *social* improvement. With them the struggle for existence was even more bitter than with the Dutch

pioneers of '47, and consequently it is not to be wondered at that the materialistic spirit was correspondingly strong among them. But during the first decades of the 19th century this struggle for existence, in which really the whole nation was involved, and which unavoidably bred a spirit of materialism, was still counter-balanced by another struggle, carried on in the halls of Congress, in the press, in the pulpit, in country-stores, in the homes, and later on the fields of battle, for the freedom of the slave and the continuation of the Union, which called forth all the *moral* and *spiritual* energies of the nation. But when in 1865 this gigantic struggle ended, the re-action set in. For years and years the national mind had been agitated over principles of public morality and righteousness, during the last four years the nation had put forth almost super-human efforts, the tension of the soul had reached the very limit of human endurance, and now with peace came an utter collapse. The nation flung itself with redoubled energy upon the work of repairing the frightful material losses caused by the war. With the spiritual forces of the people exhausted, there was now nothing left to preserve the equilibrium in the national life, so that there is small cause for wondering at the *materialistic* tone, which to-day is undeniably pronounced in American life.

Remembering then the state of mind in which our people came to this country, the struggle which we had to carry on here, and the prevailing tone of American life into the midst of which we were thrown, and above all not forgetting how worldly the heart of man is by nature, how he is earthly out of the earth, how he is fettered to the dust, all wonderment ceases when we see many of our people thinking of almost nothing but dollars, and having no higher ideal than to become rich.

Now nothing is removed farther from our thoughts than to discourage a serious, an energetic, a conscientious application to the material things of life. What modern scientists, such as Huxley and Tyndall, teach when they tell us that the basis of life is physical, was expressed far back in times of antiquity by one of the friends of Job when he said, "Our foundation is in the dust". We are created body and soul, and the needs of the body are *first*. Paul says the *spiritual* was not first, but the *natural*. What the Colonists of the 17th and of the 19th century *had* to do first was to carry on the struggle for existence. Van Raalte perfectly realized that the basis of life is physical. There was nothing *over-spiritual* in him. He had an open eye for the natural side of human life. When stopping for the winter in Detroit, he had made a study of the natural resources of the State of Michigan, and in selecting the site for his colony, he had taken into the most careful consideration the probabilities it held out of material, financial success. To-day the struggle for existence, although it no longer has that desperate character of the days when it was a question of to be or not to be, still continues. The ground is cursed because of sin, and it brings forth thorns and thistles, and God's decree stands immutable till the end of time that we are to eat bread in the sweat of our face and in sorrow all the days of our life. Paul, the great missionary of the Gospel, commanded the Christians at Thessalonica that if any did not work, neither should he eat. Scripture itself, therefore, teaches us that we are to work, work with all our might for our daily bread; and at the same time, once for all, destroys all Socialistic illusions by revealing the fact that this working for a livelihood will always bear the God-ordained bitter character of a *struggle*.

But granting all that, still the question should be seriously

put: Can we live by bread alone? Have we a body only, or have we not also a soul? And admitted that the needs of the body are *first*, are not, however, the needs of the soul the *highest*?

And so the question comes back to us with increased emphasis: What are we here for in this country? Are we, having once become American citizens, here simply to earn as many dollars as possible, and perhaps become rich, or . . . should we have also other and wider objects in life, should we have some higher purpose and nobler ideal?

We have seen that to be an American citizen means that we are no longer Dutch. But this is merely negative. To be an American citizen means more. Being American citizens means that *we may enjoy all the privileges, but also must bear all the responsibilities of American citizenship*. In one word, we are to participate *to the full* in American life. We are no longer to feel ourselves as something separate from America. We are not to think of America any more as something set over against us. We are to feel ourselves as an *integral part* of America. If somebody says America it means us. What concerns America concerns us. We are to feel ourselves at home in this country. The language of the country is henceforth to be our language. With our new country's history and institutions, we are to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted. We are to cast in our lot with the fortunes of this Republic. Her welfare is our welfare, her woe is our woe. We are to declare from the depths of our soul:

"Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee;
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!"

The question: What are we here for? each one of us therefore should answer by saying: We are here not only to *receive* but also

to *give*; we are here not only to participate in the blessings of this country, but we are here also to do something for this country, to the best of our ability. WE HAVE A WORK TO DO, A TASK TO PERFORM, A MISSION TO FULFILL.

Our new country can justly demand these things of us. We owe these duties to our new country. This Republic hospitably flung its doors wide open to us. We were allowed to settle wherever we pleased. Cordially we were invited to share through honest labor in the wealth of this continent. No obstacle was ever placed in our way to make progress, but instead many among us can testify to the willing kindness of the people among whom we settled to extend helping hands. We simply mention in passing the historic friendship of Judge Kellogg from Allegan for Dr. Van Raalte.

Nor should we think lightly of this unbounded hospitality. Of late years the question has seriously been raised, and with good reason, whether it is not becoming necessary for this Republic, out of regard for its own proper interests, to set some limit to this hospitality. The stream of immigration has been constantly swelling till last year the high water mark was reached. Heretofore the capacity of the American people to assimilate the foreign elements was believed to be next to infinite. In view of the enormous number, but more so because of the character of the recent immigrants, a large percentage of whom came from the Southern countries of Europe, grave doubt has been cast upon the infinity of America's assimilating power. To some who knocked at the gate, admission has been refused. Let us see to it that our country never has occasion to doubt whether she did wise to let us in.

Happily, and we say it with some degree of pride, the Dutch immigrant has shown himself a not entirely unworthy citizen of this great and good country. We point to the cities of Holland in Michigan and Pella in Iowa and the country round about, and ask what those regions were half a century ago and what they are now. Some of us took part in two of the great national labors. As pioneers they helped in the work of reclaiming this continent. As soldiers they shed their blood to uphold the righteousness and the very existence of the nation. There are those among us who still bear the marks of that struggle, and others who bear the marks of the war with Spain in their bodies.

But rather than glory in our past deeds let us, with an eye to the future, return to the question asked before: What are we here for? and to the answer given: We have a work to do, a task to perform, a mission to fulfill.

What is that task, that work, that mission?

We have seen that as American citizens, we are to participate to the full in the life of America. We are then to continue to enjoy the privileges of American citizenship, and even enter into an ever fuller and more complete enjoyment of those privileges.

There is no reason why every one of us should not constantly try to make also material progress, and improve his social condition. Some of us perhaps still feel themselves too much as strangers in our new country, and hold themselves back a little too much. We should not in the slightest degree abate in the struggle for existence. This American continent is large, and in many respects its resources still lie untouched. It is our duty to help in developing them. For when God had made man, he blessed him,

and this is the task which he assigned to the human race, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue it*."

Is the mad chase after money, the ruling passion to become rich, the materialistic spirit to be encouraged then? God forbid! We have the apostolic warning, "But they that will become rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Above all, the teachings of Jesus himself on this point sound one same note throughout, and that not an uncertain note. Call to mind this one word, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

What then? How are we to reconcile these two? On the one hand Scripture tells us to do with all our might what our hand finds to do; everywhere laziness is condemned; and the word with which God sends man forth upon his career is: Subdue the earth. On the other hand the Bible most emphatically forbids us to seek after riches. Here, as everywhere else in life, everything depends upon the right relations, the equilibrium of things. Sin appears not only as a positive evil, but also as a disturbing element, which, by wrenching things out of their true relations, and thus destroying harmony, makes things in themselves right, wrong. "The world is out of joint", said Hamlet, and he laid his finger on the trouble. Christ came, yes to save souls, but far more than that, to restore the harmony of the universe. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times *he might gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth". As followers of God as his dear children it is one of the great problems of our existence to restore harmony in our lives, harmony between the soul and the body, between the natural and the spiritual. We shall never be able entirely to solve that problem in

this dispensation. It will be solved for us, as a part of the great universal problem, in the dispensation of the fullness of times. But the nearer we come to solving it the better we will succeed in reconciling the apparently contradictory demands of Scripture. We are to recognize and realize again the proper relation between the natural and the spiritual, the body and the soul. The natural is first, not the spiritual. The needs of the body are *first*, but those of the soul are the *highest*. We therefore still are to apply ourselves to the things of this life with all our might, even with redoubled energy, "not being slothful in business." But at the same time the piercing question of our Savior is never to be absent from our minds, "But what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" and if we give heed to this word we shall be saved from being *drowned* in the things of this life. We shall not have recourse then to dishonest practices in business for the sake of gain; we shall find time to think of other things besides of how to make money; last but not least, we shall make the lower subservient to the higher. By this last statement I mean this. We shall make money not to make money, not with the purpose of laying up treasures on earth and becoming rich; but first of all because our foundation is in the dust; in modern phrase, because the basis of life is physical, so that the possession of material things is the prerequisite of existence itself up on this earth. And then secondly, to serve our God with our earthly possessions in the things of his kingdom, in the spirit, that breathes through the prayer of David, which has been recorded for us in the last chapter of the first book of Chronicles.

We now have seen at least something of the task we have to

perform. We came here to improve our social condition, and from the start we threw ourselves energetically into the struggle for existence, so that to-day, although the struggle was hard, we enjoy a certain degree of prosperity. This struggle for existence we are to continue, in the future that lies before us, with increased vigor. For we owe it to our new country, which has so hospitably received us, to contribute further to the material welfare of the nation; and to God, who has graciously led us hither, to carry out his behest to subdue the earth. But, in performing this part of our task, we are to remember always that although the needs of the body are first, those of the soul are the highest. In other words, our labor in *material* things does belong to our task, but it is only a *small part* of the work we have to do, and it is the *lowest*.

The work, the task, the mission we have to perform is much wider, embraces many other, and much higher things. We have seen how we are American citizens, and how in that capacity we are to enjoy *all* the privileges and bear *all* the responsibilities of American citizenship. We are to participate *to the full* in American life. Willfully we may not exclude ourselves from *any* of the spheres of life. Our citizenship therefore calls upon us to share in *all* the activities of the nation: RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, and SOCIAL. It is our sacred calling to play our part, however humble, in *every one* of the three great spheres of life: the CHURCH, the STATE, and SOCIETY.

THE DANGER

AS a matter of fact every one of us does already play his part in society for the simple reason that, as long as one lives in the midst of a community, one cannot help but doing so. It may also safely be said that, almost to a man, we take part in the affairs of state, at least to the extent of more or less keeping up with politics by the reading of one or more newspapers, attending political meetings, and casting our ballot on election-days. And finally we are all members of the church.

But why then go to so much trouble, and with lengthy arguments call upon us to perform a work, which, after all has been said, you yourself must admit we are doing already! Is it not a case of much ado about nothing? Permit me to answer by asking a question in return.

Is it not true that men are liable to fall into a certain routine of life, run into ruts, so that they do their work *simply from habit*, without thinking much? And if that is so, can it be said then that we have entirely escaped that evil? To me at any rate, it seems that there is abundant reason for calling upon our people with some degree of emphasis, to take their part in all the activities of the three great spheres of life, Church, State, and Society. For it is not enough that we are doing so—as we have

seen, we can scarcely help doing it—but we should be *aware* of the fact that we are doing so, we should *realize* our duty to do so. Or, to express it in the words with which we started out, it is getting high time for us, members of the Christian Reformed Church of America, to become fully *conscious* of the position we are called upon to occupy in America, and no longer *to drift along with the current*.

For, and would to God that every soul among us could come to see it clearly, WE ARE THREATENED BY A GREAT DANGER.

I have made bold to outline our calling as I see it. We are not to keep ourselves apart, we are not to shut ourselves up within our own small circle, we are not to build up a miniature Holland; but as American citizens we are to throw ourselves whole-heartedly into the fulness of American life. But then we shall also come under the influences that make themselves felt in this country. Now American life is not simple, but extremely complex. The influences abroad are many and varied. Currents of different strength and hue mingle and struggle together. When we cast ourselves into the midst of them, the strongest current is most likely to sweep us along. To-day the strongest current in American life IS AWAY FROM GOD AND HIS WORD, THE BIBLE. And here lies the danger!

Perhaps some will feel inclined to dispute the statement that the current away from God and his Word is to-day the strongest in our country. No one, having but the slightest acquaintance with the trend of modern thought, will deny that at least the current in that direction is very strong.

How many of our statesmen to-day, when discussing ques-

tions of politics in the halls of legislature, or from the stump; how many of our journalists in their editorials give the impression that, before they spoke or wrote, they had been earnestly meditating on the will of God in the matter, and had investigated whether the lamp of God's Word could throw any light on the problem? Who, amidst the social troubles, which agitate this country with growing seriousness, has heard much of what the Bible says on the relation between capital and labor? In how many of our schools, higher and lower, is the fear of the Lord the beginning of knowledge, and his Word the final authority? To what extent is the Word of God still a controlling power in all the relations of the every day life of the home and the individual?

But, certainly, in the *church* the name of God is hallowed, and his Word holds unquestioned sway? For the church is the pillar and ground of truth. Alas, many churches have betrayed their sacred trust, and the Bible has been wounded in the house of its friends. They who are styled *ministers of the Word*, and *the doctors of Theology*, are making themselves very busy, each one, in the name of Higher Criticism, scratching out some word or text or passage. The bolder among them do not scruple to tear out pages, and mutilate whole books. Thus the authority of the Bible as the Word of God is undermined, so that still to believe with all one's heart in the divine and inspired character of the Scriptures is fast acquiring the meaning of being antiquated and hopelessly behind the times. O, most incontestably, the prophets and bards and sages of Israel have left us in the Old Testament a wealth of Jewish *literature*, which compares quite favorably indeed with the Vedas and the Zendavesta and other sacred books of the Orient; in the gospels of the New Testament we have the words of Jesus, the great Teacher, and in the epistles most ad-

mirable relics of early Christian *thought*. But that that collection of books is the divine revelation of infallible truth, and to us, as well as to the Hebrews of two thousand and more years ago, the absolute rule of life, no, that is altogether too naive; and the Greek of our day passes by, and shakes his head, for it is foolishness in his eyes.

Nominally an evangelical Protestantism still prevails in the churches. The creeds and symbols still stand, at least on *paper*.* But cases are by no means rare of people joining a certain church without believing in its creed, and without making a secret of that fact afterward. Those doctrines did very well in their time, but they have now outgrown them. They make light of the consequences, which may attend this swerving from the ancestral faith. Of course, they can not deny that certain grave evils afflict our national life, but the suggestion whether perhaps it is not possible that there is some connection between these national evils, and our forsaking the truth of the Bible is received by them with a contemptuous smile, or a cold shrug of the shoulders. They are optimists. They will admit a growing religious indifference and increasing worldliness, but with strange futility they will forever continue to assert in the same breath, with an assurance that nothing can shake, that the world never was better than it is to-day. Moreover, if you will believe them, the world is going to keep on growing better every day, the last times will be the best, and finally everything will turn out allright.† These people cry murder when the church, to defend its faith, takes men like Dr. Briggs and MacGiffin to task, but when anybody rises up to plead with some

*An important exception has to be made here in regard to the Westminster Confession of Faith, which has recently been revised, abbreviated, and somewhat changed by the Presbyterian Church.

†The Hon. G. J. Diekema: *Lichtstralen*, etc.

warmth the truth of the old creed, they find difficulty to contain themselves. They demand pulpit oratory and choir music, to satisfy the spiritual hunger of their soul? no, but to gratify their craving for aesthetic pleasure. For the *creed* of their church they feel nothing, a more elaborate *ritual* kindles all their latent enthusiasm.

Great numbers among the clergy believe even less of the fundamentals of Christianity than the people. The anonymous author of "Dangerous Tendencies in American Life" in part characterizes them thus. Their private ideas are far in advance of what they teach. They impart the truth to their people as these, in their judgment are able to bear it. They believe themselves engaged in a very necessary and important work of leading the people on. In this respect, however, they are extremely circumspect, and hence their preaching lacks all strength and power. They teach as the scribes and Pharisees, and not with authority. The old, historic meaning of the doctrine is explained away by them. Their preaching has lost all edge, and does no longer prick the conscience of the sinner. Their preaching of course does not rest on any of the old creeds, but strange to say, it is also not based on any announced, well-defined, coherent system of philosophy. In their sermons, fragments of philosophic thought, derived from different systems arrayed against each other in mortal combat, are found side by side.

Was Campbell Morgan far from hitting the mark when, in a meeting in this city held especially for ministers and theological students, he summed up the whole religious situation of America in two words: Uncertainty and Indifference? Uncertainty among the ministers, indifference among the people. Christianity has come to mean little more with many people than devotion to works

of charity. The philanthropical activities are the boast of many churches, and at the same time the sign of the vitality of the Christianity of their members. Worse than that, the churches of our country are rapidly being *secularized*. The BOUNDARY LINES between the *Church* and the *World* are becoming ever more faint. The Church has become a *social* rather than a *religious* institution. The religion of many is nothing but a *decorous worldliness*. They have become lovers of pleasures more than of God. Mr. Worldling, of Harris' Allegory, has sung his siren song, and Miss Church-member has listened. And that in the face of the apostle's exhortation, "Be not conformed to this world." This is the kind of respect in which not two or three, but the majority of churches hold the Bible. And if this is the kind of reverence the *Church*, to which the words of life have been entrusted, shows for the Bible, can we then still hide from ourselves the ominous fact that the current away from God and his Word in our country is very strong?

The great danger that threatens us is, that this mighty current away from God and his Word WILL ALSO SWEEP US ALONG. Supposing we should shut ourselves up within the walls of our own small denomination, then we might escape this danger. But, as we have seen, it is our sacred calling to cast ourselves into the fulness of the surging sea of American life, and participate in all the national activities: religious, political, and social. Besides, as we have seen, as a matter of fact we are all of us, be it then more or less consciously, playing our part in Church, State, and Society. It would be simplicity itself to fancy that we can avoid exposure to the time-spirit. The older people among us, because they do

not understand the language of this country, may not undergo the influence of the time-spirit to any great extent; the younger generation through all the various avenues of personal contact, the hearing of lectures and sermons, and—what above all we should not forget—through the reading of books, magazines, and newspapers, have been in the past, are at present, and more and more in the future will be coming in touch with this time-spirit. The whole atmosphere is contaminated, and they cannot help but breath it. I add: Who can tell how many of our Christian Reformed people *have been swept away already?* Ask every serious-minded minister among us who has his eyes open, and is watching his flock as every faithful shepherd should do. Ask fathers and mothers among us.

We came here to seek social improvement, and by far the greater number of us found it. But if our Church is in such great danger of suffering shipwreck on the sea of American life, and if we ourselves run such risk of being swept away by the current that turns aside from God and his Word, had we not better return to our old fatherland? For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain all the millions of American wealth, yea the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Let us not for one single moment barbor the thought that this danger is peculiarly *American*, nor that our own Reformed Church and creed is in special danger. All churches and creeds are threatened, not only the Reformed and Presbyterian, but the Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, and Catholic as well. It is not alone the doctrines of the total depravity of man, the sovereignty of God's grace, predestination, and similar characteristically Reformed dogmas, that

are being assailed; the very fundamentals of Christianity, held by all believers of whatever denomination, are called into question. *Christianity itself is at stake.* An un—, we may speak more strongly, an anti-christian tidal wave is sweeping not over America alone, it has wrought even more havoc in Europe. A spirit of falling away is at large among all Christian nations.

The opposition to God and his Word can be traced back to the beginning of history. Adam and Eve began by disobeying the word of prohibition. The nations swerved farther and farther from the living God. Israel alone could be called the people of God. But read the prophets, and you will see what rebellion there was even among the covenant people. In the fulness of time Christ was born, and within about three centuries Christianity was made the state-religion of the Roman Empire, which included the then civilized world. The closing of the schools of philosophy at Athens, in 529, by the Emperor Justinian, signalized the victory of Christianity over pagan thought. From that time till well on into the modern period, it ruled in the realm of thought and action. The Renaissance however was a rejuvenation of paganism, and to it the beginnings of modern philosophy may be traced back. In France Descartes arose, in Holland Spinoza. During the 18th century a deistic and rationalistic philosophy in England and Germany assumed a more and more hostile attitude toward Christianity. The new, anti-christian philosophy bore fruit in the French Revolution. In Holland it was responsible for the dead condition, in which we found the church there at the beginning of the previous century, which in turn led to the movement of Separation.

This tremendous upheaval in Europe made its influence felt also on this side of the Atlantic, even in Revolutionary and Colonial

times, but with ever growing strength during the 19th century. Theodore Parker gave the impetus to a group of young men among whom Ralph Waldo Emerson, the most famous of America's thinkers, whose first centenary has recently been celebrated, became the foremost in leading away from God and his Word; Henry Ward Beecher, the renowned pulpit-orator, moved in the same direction; and Lyman Abbot is now among the foremost champions of modernism in his widely read weekly, the Outlook. To-day this anti-christian spirit manifests itself in the Church as worldliness; in the State as socialism and anarchism, to which our late president William MacKinley fell a victim; in Science as higher criticism, new theology, and Evolutionism.

In the form of Evolutionism this anti-christian spirit has embodied itself in a system, which contains a complete life and world view, logically deduced from one fundamental principle. Upon the dogma of Evolution not only the natural sciences have been built up, but the social and spiritual sciences of history, sociology, economy, law, philology, philosophy and theology as well. No system of philosophy that has appeared before this stands so diametrically opposed to Christianity at every turn as this system of Evolutionism. If the Christian declares his belief in God the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, the Evolutionist announces that the universe is the result of a process of natural development, through countless ages. If the Christian asserts that in creation God placed man, as his image-bearer, on an unmeasurably high level from which he fell down, the Evolutionist teaches that there has been constant and uninterrupted climbing upward from the simplest amoeba form to ape, and from ape to man. When the Christian weeps over his sins, the Evolutionist speaks of all moral stains as remnants of our former barbarism. If,

to present just one more contrast, the Christian bows himself humbly before a God who made man after *his* image, the Evolutionist speaks of God as the sublimate, the precipitation of *man's* noblest thoughts. Reconciliation between Christianity and Evolutionism is therefore impossible. What one calls black the other calls white, and vice versa.

When Darwin's "Origin of Species" and "Descent of Man" first appeared the whole Christian world was dazed. But the first shock soon was over. Then came Spencer, Huxley, John Fiske in this country, and a host of others to systematize and popularize Darwin's teachings, and in a truly astonishingly short time the new system had conquered the world. *Veni, vidi, vici*. To-day he, who finds within himself the courage to declare that he still believes in the literal truth of Moses' account of creation, is almost universally looked down upon with a mingled feeling of pity and contempt.

We can therefore not escape the danger of being swept along with the current away from God and his Word, by leaving America again. The anti-christian spirit is abroad in both the Old and New World. And while staying in America, we cannot avoid the danger by shutting ourselves up within the walls of our own small denomination; in the first place because, as we have seen, that is impossible; and in the second place because, for us as American citizens, that is impermissible. What is to be done?

To be carried along by the current away from God and his Word, that is the great danger which to-day threatens every indi-


vidual Christian, all Christian churches, and all Christian nations. There is no greater danger imaginable. This danger includes all other possible dangers. For only they who fear God and obey his Word enjoy peace and happiness. And therefore, since this is *the* danger which threatens us, the question: WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN ORDER THAT WE MAY WARD IT OFF? is *the* question, the all-engrossing question for us.

We, as members of the Christian Reformed Church, can give but one answer. The only way in which we can hope to escape the danger of being swept along is by clinging to the rock of our *Reformed Confession*. Our only defense lies in *Calvinism*.

We can now finally also see our calling a little more completely. Not only as citizens of the State, but also as members of the Church, it is our calling to participate in all the activities of national life. The great danger that threatens, not only in the Church, but in all spheres of life, is the movement away from God and his Word. To help in warding off that danger is therefore our highest duty. As members of the Christian Reformed Church we find our bulwark in our Reformed Confession, in the principles of Calvinism. We are to show ourselves everywhere as *Calvinistic Americans*.



THE COLLEGE.

UR calling is glorious, but difficult. How shall we be able to fulfill it? The task imposed upon us imperatively demands a certain degree of intellectual development. We are in need of education. We cannot do without a *complete school-system of our own*. We must have *Grammar-schools* for primary, *Academies* for secondary, and a *College* for higher education.

Of the grammar-school I shall but speak in passing. It is not difficult to see why our calling, as members of the Christian Reformed Church, and as citizens of the United States, demands education. It is evident at the first glance that we cannot participate in all the activities of a civilized nation, without some degree of intellectual culture. The form of government in our Church is presbyterian, in our State republican. Now both the presbyterian form of government in the Church, and the republican in the State are based on an optimistic faith in the efficacy of particular and common grace; but both of them also loudly call for general popular education. Neither a Reformed Church nor a republican State can possibly exist without a rather high standard of intelligence

among *all* its members and citizens. In the Church of Rome in which the clergy hold all the power, and in an absolute Monarchy where the king rules alone, ignorance of the masses is even desirable for the continuation of those institutions. But a presbyterian and republican form of government means that not one single class, but all the members, and all the citizens take active and responsible parts in the affairs of Church and State. All are eligible to office, all are called upon to vote for office-holders, and on certain occasions all are called upon to vote directly upon certain laws and regulations. Every one sees at once that such an organization of Church and State lays a task upon the shoulders of all the members and citizens, which cannot be performed unless *all* receive a certain amount of education.

We, as Calvinistic Americans of Dutch descent, ought to see the necessity of popular education very clearly. Dutch, American, and Calvinistic are three qualifications, each one of which alone ought to guarantee an intense and abiding interest in education. We come from a country where the two great stimuli to culture, a presbyterian Church and a republican State, were active for centuries. During the Middle Ages it was in the *free cities* of Europe that the Renaissance had its origin, and Learning revived. These free cities flourished pre-eminently in Italy and in the *Netherlands*. With the opening of Modern times, the Reformation introduced the presbyterian form of church government into Holland, and the war with Spain left it a free Republic. Nor did these two stimuli fail to operate here. At the time of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, there was scarcely a child in the Netherlands, that could not both read and write. In America these same two stimuli have had an opportunity to work even more untrammelled. And it is Calvinism itself, which has given rise to

the presbyterian form of church government, while at the same time no other factor in the modern period has been more powerful in fostering republican freedom.

The Reformed Churches have always realized the necessity of educating their members in order that they might be able to take active part in the life of the Church. Besides, the man of Reformed confession does not, as the Roman Catholic, believe because the Church believes so, but he is expected to be able to render account of the faith that is in him. Here we find the reason why our Church insists inflexibly on the work of catechizing.

The Puritans of New England from the beginning saw the necessity of popular education. They were so deeply convinced of this necessity of general intelligence in a Republic that, while standing on the edge of an unbroken continent, swarming with savages, they founded a system of common schools. It was this conviction that inspired the famous educational clause in the Ordinance of 1787. Again it is this same conviction upon which our Public School system is based. And finally it was no other conviction than this that urged Van Raalte on in his efforts in behalf of education, while all around him was still a wilderness, and his followers were engaged in the struggle for existence.

We have seen how hard that struggle was and how all-absorbing, so that it is no wonder that among the Dutch Immigrants of '47 education was at first somewhat neglected. Soon, however, their Dutch origin and Calvinistic instincts re-asserted themselves. The exhortations of Van Raalte and others were heard, and presently it became the rule among us to give the children at least the primary education afforded by the grammar-school.

1. WHY WE NEED A COLLEGE

An increasing number among us do not stop with the grammar-school. Now that the first desperate phase of the struggle for existence has been passed through, and many of us have attained to a certain degree of material prosperity, the way has been cleared for giving the children an even higher education. In every city where our people settled, the roll of the High School has many names, that indicate the Dutch descent of the pupils. More than that, not a few, often at the cost of great sacrifices from the side of the parents, have received a College training. Thus the necessity, but also the advantages of secondary and higher education are gradually dawning upon the minds of an ever increasing number among us. There are many who give their children a High School education, even if it is definitely understood that the life of those children is not to be devoted to any of the learned professions. There are even some among us,—as there are great numbers among our fellow American citizens—who hold College degrees, but now walk behind the plow, stand behind the counter, or sit behind the desk. Do these men make any direct application of their College studies to their present daily work. Most assuredly, no. But if you ask them whether they regret their four years in College, they will answer that they were the best years of their lives. And although they cannot make any direct use of what they learned, it has made them more intelligent members of the Church and of Society, more useful citizens, more interesting companions; and their minds have been enriched with stores of knowledge, which will forever remain a source of pleasure to them amidst the drudgery of every day life.

These people display a pure appreciation of culture. Such love of learning might be expected among a race,

descended from the defenders of Leyden. In 1568 the Prince of Orange unfurled the banner of liberty in the Netherlands. In a short but decisive campaign, however, Alva crushed out all opposition. For the next four years the country lay helpless under the heel of the tyrant. But then in 1572, the capture of the Brill, by the Beggars of the Sea, became the sign for renewed revolt. In another swift campaign Alva swept over the country and captured the cities of Zutphen, Narden, and Harlem. With the fall of Harlem the doom of brave, little Holland appeared to be sealed. For a moment the repulse of the Spaniards from the walls of Alkmaar shed a new ray of hope. But the Spanish hosts turned southward and invested Leyden. The Prince made every effort to raise the siege, but without success. The dykes were cut to drown the Spaniards, but an east wind kept the water back. The citizens at every assault repelled the Spanish with bloody losses; even the women poured their boiling water, and hurled their burning wreaths of tar. But although the Spaniards were kept out, it was not possible to keep out famine. With every hope of relief cut off, a deep gloom settled over the whole country. The fall of Leyden seemed inevitable. But still the burghers held out. The grass in the streets, cooked leather, rats and mice, served for food. When the Spanish commander sent a message to urge surrender, he received the reply that the burghers would rather devour their left arm in order that they might still continue to defend the city with their right. At last the wind veered. A strong gale from the west impelled the water landward. The country was flooded, the Spanish had to break up the siege, and Leyden was saved. The citizens were offered a reward for their heroic defense. And what did these burghers choose in the midst of a struggle for life or death, a struggle which

and drained the city not only of blood, but also of treasure,—freedom from taxation for a number of years? No, but a *University*.

This is the origin of the University of Leyden, for years the most famous in Europe. It was not established at the decree of a king; it was not the creation of a millionaire; it was founded at the desire of the *common people*. These plain citizens of Leyden had a love for learning. With some of them, undoubtedly, as with some of us to-day, it was a love of learning as such. But with the majority, as it is the case now, and will be the case at all times, this love of learning rooted in their clear perception of the fact that a free Church, and a free State, and a progressive Society require more learning than an elementary education can furnish. We need not only grammar-schools, but we need no less *High Schools* or *Academies*, and *Colleges*.

If we need a College, we need a High School or Academy; for the High School is the connecting link between the graded school and the College. The High School prepares for College. But there are still other reasons for the existence of the High School. In many of the vocations of life at the present time, although they can by no means be classed among the learned professions, a High School education is of great value. Especially in the larger business establishments of various sorts, a High School graduate will find himself preferred above others who, after having finished the eighth grade, took nothing but a short business course. This preference shown to High School graduates is due to a general rise of the standard of education. With the passing of the years this rise will continue even at an increased rate, and consequently the

High School or Academy graduate will find himself in ever greater demand. But besides we need teachers for the lower schools, and for preparing them we need the High and Normal School. This demand alone will make the High School forever necessary. So we see that irrespective of the College, our calling as members of Church, State, and Society, puts forth demands, by themselves sufficiently strong to insure the existence of the High School. Even if a boy or girl never expects to see the inside of a College, there may still be many reasons to send them to a High School. If, however, it is realized that we also need Colleges then that is one more reason for the existence of the High School or Academy.

And of course every one, on a moment's reflection, sees clearly the necessity of having Colleges. The life of a nation absolutely demands institutions where an education is offered, which will enable those who have received it to take their places as leaders in the various fields. We have seen that we need High Schools. But if we need High Schools then we need also Colleges. For just as the High School must prepare teachers for the graded schools, so the College in turn is needed to prepare teachers for the High Schools.

Furthermore, and that was originally the chief business of the College, it is the place for preparing young men to enter upon the study of Theology. In other words, it is the place where our future ministers of the Word may lay their literary foundation. When Colleges were established in the wilderness of New England, it was under the motto, "For Christ and the Church." Now among us too it is felt more and more strongly, that it should become *the rule* that our future ministers receive a

complete College training, before they enter the sacred domain of Theology. I say the rule, hinting that also this rule has its exceptions. In certain cases a course of eleven years, eight preparatory, and three theological, might prove impracticable because of advanced years or other circumstances. If the rule were then rigorously enforced, otherwise valuable material for the ministry might be lost. For such exceptional cases provision ought to be made. But leaving thus room for exceptions, there can be no doubt that the time has arrived, that a College training for ministers should become the rule. As we have seen, the general standard of education is constantly being raised. It would be fatal if our ministers should fall behind in this movement of progress. But if they are to keep abreast of the times also in *the future*, with constantly rising standards of knowledge; especially, if they are to be sufficiently heavily armed for the combat against the anti-christian time-spirit, which, as we saw, threatens us with such great danger; if they are to be able to repel the attacks made on the Word of God; if they are to prove equal to the task of guiding their flock in the midst of so much, that tends to carry away from God and his Word, then a complete College training for our ministers becomes an absolute necessity. Besides, with nearly all other sciences taking such gigantic strides forward, it would be unpardonable not to develop the science of Theology proportionally. But if we may hope for such a progress in Theology, we must have men, who have had the literary training necessary for scientific work in Theology. To-day there are everywhere in our country many men, with the most splendid natural gifts, and who make excellent pastors, but who will never be able to do *scientific* work in Theology, for the simple reason that they lack the required collegiate training. They are handicapped for life.

But we need not only High School teachers, and well-educated ministers; we need well-educated politicians, let me rather say statesmen, as well. If there is any class of men to-day, who need a good and wide education, it is the men who are called upon to guide the affairs of city, state, or nation. There is a crying need of the scholar in politics.* Not that the man without a college degree cannot do valuable work in public life. Not that a man with a College degree is sure to prove a good representative. The man with a College degree may be a mere doctrinaire, totally unfit for practical politics. He may be a scoundrel, of which species we have already a surplus. Men without a College degree will perhaps always remain the majority. But the problems of municipal government in our large cities, the problems of national politics, the various problems involved in the labor question, cannot be dealt with successfully except by men who have a knowledge of political science, economy, sociology, and history, such as can be gained only by protracted study. It is possible of course for men of natural ability to gain a deep insight into these problems by private study; still it remains true that the most successful tackling of these complicated problems presupposes a wideness of view, a broadness of training such as can be derived only from a college education not merely in the sciences mentioned above, but in the humanities and philosophy as well. At any rate it is true that no one rightfully can lay claim to the title of statesman, who is not a man of broad and deep study. In the same breath we may mention the editors. If our politicians could richly profit by a College course, the same certainly holds true of them.

But we need a College not only to educate our ministers, High School teachers, statesmen and editors; with the general

*See Roosevelt: *The College Graduate and Public Life.*

rise of educational standards it is becoming desirable for our physicians, and really necessary for our lawyers to receive a College training.

Everybody will now see clearly how the life of the church, the state, and society demand learning higher than can be taught in either the grammar or the High School, so that we cannot do without the College. But if this higher learning is necessary then we need the College also for its own sake. Then the College must train the men who later are to become teachers in the College. Then we need the College, with its libraries, museums, and laboratories, as the conservatory of learning. We need the College as an intellectual center. The College is needed in order that the opportunity be provided for men to devote their whole lives, without worry, to the cause of learning, the advancement of science.

2 WHY WE NEED A COLLEGE OF OUR OWN.

It may be taken for granted now perhaps that the need of a College in general is clear to everybody among us. But now, within recent years, there has been talk among us that we should establish a College of our own. If we could for a moment imagine the impossible condition of our country being without a single College, then we would immediately feel the impulse to establish one. But in reality there are in these United States some 480 institutions that bear the name of College or University. Within a radius of 150 miles, with Grand Rapids as a center, there are at least two large Universities and half a dozen good Colleges. Under these circumstances we may well pause and ponder whether it is really necessary for us, members of the Christian Reformed Church, to add another College to those already existing.

For if it is not really necessary we had better not do it. The establishing and maintaining of a College is not a small thing for people who have to work hard for their daily bread. A College costs treasures of money. Why should the parents among us not rather send their sons and daughters to Colleges already existing, and contribute their money to them so as to make them stronger and better? Do we really need a College of our own?

We have seen that there is a strong current away from God and his Word among all Christian nations. An anti-christian spirit is pervading both Europe and America. "For Christ and the Church", was the motto under which the Puritans established their first Colleges. But now it has come to pass that those very Colleges have become the storm-centers of the present anti-christian movement; the hot-houses of ideas hostile to the Bible as the Word of God. Instead of helping to build up the Kingdom of Christ, they break down. Instead of supporting the churches that founded them, it is from them that the conceptions proceed, which undermine the creeds, and produce religious indifference. To the Colleges must be attributed directly, in large measure, the low condition of the churches. Evolutionism holds sway in all the Colleges, and is more or less openly taught. Instead of *for* "Christ and the Church", they have become *against*.

I have not said too much. Are there not fathers and mothers among us who have sent a son or daughter to College, and who now torment themselves with vain regrets? Their children have gained an in many respects excellent education, but lost their faith. Not we Christian Reformed alone view the College with apprehension, in all the denominations all who hold fast to the old ortho-

dox views, do the same thing. And they, who are recognized as leaders of modern thought, themselves admit that the present day College is in many ways a danger to Christianity. President William R. Harper of the University of Chicago, who certainly in every way may be regarded as well qualified to answer the question, "Is infidelity increasing in the Colleges?", which he propounds in the first issue of the new religious weekly, *Christendom*, thus writes in part: "What is the situation to-day? Is it true that

there has been a remarkable decrease in the actual teachings of Christian truth, while a large and growing emphasis has been placed upon the teaching of branches altogether devoid of religious character? Yes. Is it true that of the students who enter college very few indeed look forward to Christian service of any kind, the larger number having, as a matter of fact, only the slightest possible interest in religious matters? Yes. Is it also true that many college men who might otherwise enter the ministry turn aside to teaching, or to business, or perhaps to some other line of work because of the influence of the purely technical instruction given in the colleges? Yes. Is it certainly a fact that many men and women who entered college as Christian workers in their home churches take little or no active part in church life after they have completed their college work? Yes.

"If, now, all this is true, or even half of it, one need not be surprised to find the feeling frequently expressed throughout the religious world that college education is tending to decrease Christian faith, and that institutions founded and conducted for distinctly Christian ends are, in fact, educating their student away from the church. In a word, that religious infidelity is increasing in our colleges. Is this conclusion to be accepted? I answer: Yes, and no."

President Harper then goes on to show that the College student of to-day, when it comes down to essential things, has a far more sturdy belief in fundamentals of the christian religion than the student of fifty years ago. He says:

"And our colleges may be less determined to support some peculiar view of God and theology, but they are producing

men and women who are not content to live in a universe in which there is no God. If education tends to lead college students to adopt the shorter form of every creed, it is teaching them at the same time that religion is an elemental fact in human life, and that no man can be a thoroughly educated man who does not know the fear of the Lord."

He holds that the outlook for Christianity is on the whole encouraging. But Dr. Harper then means by Christianity the modern, and not the old orthodox conception of it, based upon the Bible. This might be reasonably supposed from the fact, of which Dr. Harper never made a secret, that he is a leader in America in the field of Higher Criticism. But it appears also from a sentence in which he says that unless students are helped to see the true relation of the Biblical narratives to Christianity, it is almost an invariable rule that unless such students are helped to see the true relation of the Biblical narratives to Christianity; it is almost an invariable rule that they pass through a period of great religious depression and uncertainty, which in some cases results in either religious indifference or a half-cynical contempt for the teachings of the church. The implication clearly is that a belief in the literal truth of the Bible is not essential to Christianity. Now if the outlook is encouraging for the modern conception of Christianity, it is discouraging for the old orthodox view of it. And since to our mind the modern conception of Christianity is not true Christianity at all, President Harper's article shows the truth of the statement that many Colleges to-day are a danger to Christianity.

Besides the many Colleges and Universities in which the teaching and atmosphere are decidedly anti-christian, there are many more Colleges which are still in name Christian, but in reality also overpowered by the time-spirit. These Colleges as a rule point with pride to their Christian character. But as a matter of

fact their Christianity consists in little more than in required chapel and church attendance, a class in Christian evidences and a Y. M. C. A. and a Y. W. C. A. All this is very excellent and no Christian College can do without these elements. But these features alone by no means make a College Christian. These things are merely surface features. A College is first and last an institution of learning. If therefore a College is to be Christian it must be Christian as an institution of learning. Now it is precisely on this vital point that a vast number of these Colleges cannot stand the test. They accept not alone the well-established *facts*, but also the speculative *conclusions* of an unbelieving science, and then waste their time in weak and fruitless attempts to reconcile these conclusions with the teachings of Scripture. And Christianity is always the loser. When it is found out that a certain article of the creed, a truth of Scripture can in no way be made to harmonize with a dictum of science, that article or truth is finally given up as "not essential." In this way exactly it comes about what Dr. Harper said, viz. that the student of to-day believes fewer things. These Colleges point to the interest of their students in Y. M. C. A. work as an index to the Christian character of the institution. And no doubt many of the students are still Christians at *heart*, but with their *heads* they are not. These Colleges are even more dangerous than Colleges in which the teaching is *known* not to be Christian. The condition of these Colleges faithfully reflects the condition of the Churches, noted in a previous chapter. In large measure they are even responsible for the present condition of the Church. Before the future ministers enter the Seminary they have learned to doubt the creed of their Church in the College. As a rule these doubts are not again removed during their theological course, and thus skepticism enters the Church.

We have seen the necessity of Colleges. We have seen that many out of our midst go to College. We have realized that we are threatened by the danger of being swept along with the current away from God and his Word, and that this current has one of its most important sources in the College of to-day. We have perceived our highest calling to consist in helping to ward off that danger. Can there be any question then as to whether we need a College of *our own*? Perhaps there is still a lingering doubt in the minds of a great many of us. That last doubt must also be removed, even though it will cause surprise here and anger there. Great numbers of us still live in the peaceful assurance that Hope College is an institution to which they can safely send their children. That is not so. As members of a Reformed church we believe that our only defense against the danger that threatens lies in Calvinism. Therefore we cannot be satisfied with anything less than a Calvinistic College. And Hope is not Calvinistic. In Hope too the doctrine of *election* is ignored, by some openly sneered at; and the evolutionary dogma of *selection* receives homage, at least in the natural sciences. Hyper-Calvinism is rebuked, but genuine Calvinism is not openly and fearlessly proclaimed. If any student leaves Hope with an enthusiasm for Calvinism, it is not in his Alma Mater that he received his inspiration. Calvinism is not held up to the students there as the one system which will prove able to stand firm as a rock in the midst of the current away from God and his Word. Surely, Hope is pervaded by Christian influences, but it is precisely that vague type of Christianity which we called more dangerous than open hostility. Hope, instead of planting itself squarely in every one of its departments upon the rock of the principles of Calvinism and the Reformed Confession, which, by virtue of denominational affiliation, is its as well as

ours, is drifting away with the current. Hope College, with the denomination which supports it, in this respect stands on a par with so many other Colleges and denominations in our country.

Hope College has done much good in the past, and we trust will continue to do so in the future. Not only its own denomination is greatly indebted to it, we just as well. It has done much for the intellectual development of both groups of the Immigration of '47. It is true of what we are reminded on every occasion, some of its alumni have been called to the highest positions among us. We shall always gladly recognize our obligation to Hope. But this does not in the least alter the fact that in it we do not find an institution for higher learning to which the parents among us can safely send their children, and can enable us to fulfill our highest calling of warding off the greatest danger. I say this with feelings of sincere regret. The rupture between the two groups of the Immigration of '47 should be a source of grief to every one of us. Sad indeed it is, that we cannot work together even in the matter of higher education. Joyous would be the day when, with the rupture healed, we could stand again shoulder to shoulder. For there is no sadder spectacle than to see the many fragments into which the Church of Christ is torn. In the face of the growing power of the enemy we need each other so much. And especially do we need each other in the field of higher education. For a College requires men and money. Re-union is not to be sought, however, by passing lightly over our differences. That can result only in new gains for a constantly more fading Christianity. Let the friends of Hope ask themselves what Dr. Van Raalte would say to-day of the institution, founded largely through his untiring efforts, and of all his projects cherished most dearly by him, if he could rise from the grave. Let them bring

the Reformed principles, for the inculcation and defense of which Hope was established, to honor again, and we shall hail the day. For the way will then be opened for re-union.

In the meanwhile there is little prospect of such a change on the part of Hope in the immediate future, and no choice is left to us. We must establish a College of our own. College of our own does not mean a *denominational* College in the narrow sense of the word. A school has a broader basis than a denomination. But it means a College in which our own principles reign supreme, in which the Bible is recognized as the Word of God, and therefore as the highest authority also in the domain of science. A College of our own means accordingly a Calvinistic College. Without such a College we shall not be able to fulfill our glorious, but difficult calling as Calvinistic Americans. To establish such a College parents owe to their children; we owe it to our Church and to our country; above all, we owe it to God.

3. THE POSSIBILITY OF A COLLEGE OF OUR OWN

It is necessary to establish a College of our own, but is it also *possible*? To establish a College is no small thing. Let no one think lightly of it. A College means a campus, buildings, a library, laboratories, students, and teachers, all of which costs large sums of money. For being incorporated as a College in the State of Michigan a sum of 100,000 dollars is required. But why not locate the College in another State where so high a sum is not required? Even if the *law* did not require that sum, the *needs* of the College would require it. An endowment fund of 100,000

dollars is by no means too large. For to-day no more than four or five per cent. can be counted on. As every one can estimate that would not bring in any way an extravagant sum for paying the running expenses year by year. 100,000 dollars would give us a nice start however.

Will it be possible for us to raise such a sum? Most of us have attained to a certain degree of prosperity in this country, but only very few have any capital. The great majority have to work for their daily bread. Then there are so many needs already of Church and Theological School that must be provided for. And let it be said to the honor of our people that to all these things they have as a whole always contributed liberally. But if the question should be asked, "Have you *felt* that you gave, have you *suffered* on account of it, have you found it necessary to *curtail* yourself in your own personal expenses?" but few certainly would have to answer, yes. If we are only thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a College, there can be no doubt but that we can raise the sum, if not in one, then in two or three years. Almost every family among us could contribute something for this purpose every year, over and above what they are giving already. Some perhaps not more than a few cents, but the majority certainly a few dollars, and a few even some hundreds or thousands. Then we should not forget that each year we shall be able to do more. Every year we increase in numbers for happily there is no fear of race suicide among us as yet. From year to year we shall also grow in financial strength. We should not forget that although an energetic application to the material things of life is the *lowest* part of our calling, it nevertheless is a *part* of it. It is not only the privilege, but also the duty of our people to make material progress in order that they may have more money to devote

to the Kingdom of God. If we use our money aright we may expect further blessings, but otherwise the apostle James admonishes us, "Ye ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts." In both these respects of increasing in numbers and in financial strength we are far ahead of our Reformed brethren in the Netherlands. A great increase in numbers and financial strength is not possible there, the country is already overpopulated. Our new country is capable of holding several additional millions. But in obeying the command to multiply we should not forget the command which follows immediately, viz. to replenish the earth. And in so doing, if in any way possible, we should move to new regions in *colonies* so that at once a congregation may be formed. *Individual* settlers or even two or three families are almost certain to be swallowed up, and are thus lost to our principles.

It therefore seems to me very well possible to raise the sum, if all our people are only thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a Calvinistic College. Certainly, it is perfectly true that only comparatively few of us can profit directly by the College. The majority of us can do no more than give their children a primary education. But I trust there are not many so short-sighted among us as to think that only what concerns them *directly* is of interest to them. That would be so if each one of us lived *separately*, were not the *part of a whole*. The proposed College is a matter of interest to *every one* of us, whether he can send his children to the school or not. We remember how our calling as members of the Christian Reformed church and as citizens of the United States requires a primary education of *all*. But to supply the grammar-

school with teachers we saw we need the Academy, and to furnish in turn the Academy with teachers we need the College. As members of the Church we are all interested in ministers with a complete College training. Our present ministers who, in their parsonages by private study, harder and more exhausting than many a layman can imagine, try to make up as much as possible, will be best able to tell their people of the advantages of a College education. Furthermore, are we not all interested in men who have received an education so that they can in the future give us guidance in our political life, and show us by the light of God's Word, the way we have to go also in this field? Are we not in need of men who can guide our people in the midst of the labor agitations, with which they also come in contact? Think merely of the one question of Unions. Much is being done already by *Wachter*, *Gereformeerde Amerikaan*, and *Vaandel*; but the future will demand even more. Members of the Christian Reformed Church, if we have become more or less conscious of the position we ought to occupy in our new country, if we understand our calling, and if we appreciate the dangers that threaten us, can there still be any doubt that a Calvinistic College, where men can be trained who will be able to give us guidance in every sphere of life, not by their own wisdom, but by virtue of a higher wisdom which they have derived from the Word of God, *is a matter of the most vital interest to every one among us?* Without such an institution, our people, in the midst of the richest earthly blessings, are beset by the peril of drifting away with the current from the Church, the Bible, the Reformed principles for which our fathers suffered death on the scaffold and at the stake, fought against Spain, and again in the previous century suffered persecution before they came to this country.

There have been some mutterings among us, which should be answered in this connection, because they are so utterly false, and might do some harm to the cause of the proposed College. It has been said that this agitation for a College has been inspired not by a worthy ideal, but by the desire of securing for some of us better positions as teachers. "Es geht alles um Brot", says one of the characters in Wilbrandt's *Der Meister von Palmyra*. Some among us seem to think the same thing. There are people who have no higher ideal themselves, and who now seem to find it difficult to understand that others can have. But do these people really consider us so innocent of this world that we do not realize that the teaching profession is not the best from a financial point of view? We know very well that it "pays" much better to go into business, or be a physician or lawyer. And besides we see full well that even if we wish to stick to teaching we cannot expect high salaries, if our proposed College becomes a reality. An expansion of the Academy, and an increase in teachers, because of the higher expenses, will always tend to keep the salaries down.

Let us turn to the more pleasant side of the subject again. In the early years, because of the hard struggle for existence, our people could not do much for education. We have however performed the lower part of their task, the labor in material things, well; we have been blest, and now we are in condition seriously to take up the higher part of our task, the work in intellectual and spiritual things. We now enjoy a certain degree of material prosperity, and have the necessary money at our command. The hope is furthermore well founded that from year to year we shall be better able to contribute to higher purposes.

But there is no reason why we should also not receive assistance from the outside. The proposed College should not be narrowed down to a *denominational* affair. A school has a broader basis than a denomination. What separates men in denominations is very often points of *Church-polity*. And these are just the points that do not affect a school. Of course the differences between a Catholic, an Arminian, and a Calvinist are too fundamental than they should allow of co-operation in the same school. But there is no reason why we cannot work together with an orthodox Presbyterian and a so-called Calvinistic Methodist. The Puritan type is fast dying out in our country, but there are still Calvinists outside our own denomination. There are still the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee before the Baals of our age. The only danger here is that we join hands with men who, when it comes down to the test, should prove not to be of us. This danger can be avoided by flying our Calvinistic colors from the top of the mast, bright and unfaded.

Of students there will be no lack. The standard of culture is rising every year among us. There will rise up among us constantly greater numbers of young men and young women too, who seek a higher education. Of course not everybody is expected to go to College. The majority receive gifts of God, which do not fit them for a life of study, but for other just as useful occupations. All honest occupations are honorable if, as our Catechism expresses it, we only perform our work as faithfully as the angels in heaven do their work. There are many parents among us however with bright boys, but small means. For such it will cost sacrifices to send them to College. But in this country

of ours we have before us numerous examples of poor boys who, with the sacrificing assistance of their parents, managed to obtain a College education. Why can we not imitate those examples?

4. THE LOCATION

The question of where to locate the proposed College is one of extreme importance from every point of view, and worthy of the most careful consideration. At the first glance Grand Rapids would seem to be the place. But a strong element in the West is very desirous of having the College somewhere in Iowa. The reason is obvious. We all like to have the College as close to our doors as possible. Let it be understood from the outset that to the teachers it makes no difference as such. They can locate where the College is located. For them Iowa would even have certain attractions over Michigan. But it is a question of what is best for the College. And then it seems to me Grand Rapids should be preferred. Since we all like to have the school as near to us as may be, and since of course it is not possible to satisfy all in this respect, it will be best for the College to locate it, *where it is nearest to the greatest number of us*. That place is Grand Rapids. Suppose we take any place in Iowa as the place of location. Then only the people that live in the classes of Iowa, Oostfriesland, and a small part of Illinois, will be closer to the College than if it were located at Grand Rapids. Now the statistics give 10,605 souls for the classes of Iowa and Oostfriesland, and for the other classes together 47,907. The classis of Holland alone counts more souls than Iowa and Oostfriesland together. It is true the expansion of our Church in the West is rapid, but unless a wholesale migration from the Netherlands, or from the other classes to the West takes place, the numbers in the other classes, in the natural process of growth, will

for an indefinite period of time to come, remain much larger. Besides Grand Rapids is a much larger city than any city in Iowa, in which it would be feasible to locate the College. Grand Rapids is not so large that the disadvantages of a big city are at all seriously felt, whereas it has all the advantages.

To me therefore it seems best for the College to be located in Grand Rapids, because it will then be nearest the greatest number of our people. Of course Grand Rapids itself should then show its appreciation by its contributions, but not only Grand Rapids, but all the people in the classes nearest to Grand Rapids. It will, however, not be easy for our people here, in spite of greater numbers, to compete with the people out West in the matter of contributions, because the latter as a rule, are more well-to-do. And not without reason sometimes complaints have been made about lack of appreciation in Grand Rapids. Now, I for one, would not sacrifice the interests of the College, simply out of spite. But the fact remains that Grand Rapids, the people in the classes round about it, and also in the two classes out East will have to reckon with the West.

But wherever the College may finally be located, let us all work together. Let it be impressed deeply upon the minds of every one of us that we can not afford to have more than *one* College. Even if we unite all our strength, and contribute as liberally as we possibly can; no matter how strongly the spirit, revealed in David in I Chron. 29, may work in us, we shall not be able to do more than establish one College and that a *small* one. To pay the expenses for *one year* of a large University to-day requires the sum of *one million* dollars. I say this not to discourage. With an endowment of 100,000 we have a nice start. But I say it to show that we must not think that when we have an endowment of 100,000 we have

reached the goal. We should put our ideal not low, but *high*, as high as possible. And then with Dutch perseverance, American enterprise and energy, and Calvinistic faith let us begin at the bottom, lay the foundation solid, and build, build as much, as wide, as high as God will enable us to build.

For let us remember we are building not so much for the present but for the future; we build not so much for ourselves but for the coming generations. If we now *divide* our strength, building a College in Michigan and one in Iowa, *both* will forever be stunted. Let us all understand it, this proposed College is not the hobby of a few, it is the most serious thing that has come up as yet in the history of our Church and people. Therefore in the face of our difficult calling, and of the tremendous crisis in which Christendom finds itself to-day, let us not throw away our chance of beginning to build up a College that by *united* efforts and *united* prayer, under the blessing of God Almighty, in whose name stands our help, may grow into an institution of real power, an institution which may be of incalculable service to us in helping to ward off the dangers that beset us, in fulfilling our calling in our new country in Church, State, and Society to the glory of the triune God.





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